

Remarks

Claims 33-39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,394,355 to Schlieffers et al. ("Schlieffers") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,825,002 to Roslak ("Roslak").

Applicant's presently amended Claim 33 describes a customer-operated self-checkout system. The system includes a portable terminal having a checkout station interface, a data reader and a first RF interface. The portable terminal identifies selected items using the data reader, and transmits information about the selected items via the first RF interface.

The system also includes a base station having a second RF interface, a memory, and a data output port. The base station receives the information about the selected items from the portable terminal via the second RF interface. The base station stores the item information in the memory in association with a terminal identifier, and outputs the information via the data output port.

The Applicant's system also includes a self-checkout station having a portable terminal interface, a data input port and a customer-operated automated payment-accepting subsystem. The self-checkout station receives the stored information from the base station data output port via the data input port, and accepts payment from the customer for the selected items using the payment-accepting subsystem. Applicant's new claim 55 describes the portable terminal as including terminal identification information.

Schlieffers discloses a hand-held terminal 10 in Figures 1 and 2 including a bar code scanner 32. The terminal 10 is for use with a cradle 40 to be mounted on a terminal in a grid on a dispenser 72 as shown in Figure 9, remote from a checkout station 82. The terminal 10

also includes a label 56, shown in Figure 6, viewable by an optical scanning device 32 when the terminal is placed in the cradle 40. Thus, the 'terminal 10 can operate to read label 56, and, by radio communication, notify a central computer 80 in which, of multiple cradles 40 [in the grid at the dispenser 72], terminal 10 has been placed.' Column 6, Lines 1-4.

During use of Schlieffers terminal 10, data concerning scanned items can be supplied via radio link to a computer 80; stored in the terminal 10, and provided periodically to the computer 80; or provided when the terminal 10 is stored in the cradle 40 at the terminal dispenser 72. Purchase data can then be transferred to the remote cashier station 82. Column 7, Lines 38-57.

Roslak discloses a bar code reader 40 for use with a dispenser unit 30 as shown in Figure 1. A customer returns the bar code reader 40 to the dispenser unit 30 after scanning items for purchase from a store. Selected item information can be stored on the bar code reader or communicated to a central computer. Column 4, Lines 1-46. A ticket can be issued from a printer 32 'located at or near the dispenser 30,' or, after proceeding to a remote checkout register 50, the customer can retrieve selected item information via entry of identification information into a card reader and data entry device. Column 4, Lines 27-63.

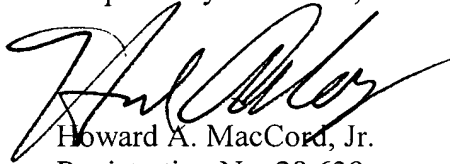
Thus, neither Schlieffers nor Roslak teaches or suggests employing portable terminal interface at a checkout system. Both references require customers to suffer the inconvenience of first returning obtaining a terminal from a dispenser, and, after shopping, returning to the terminal to a dispenser, and then proceeding to a remote checkout register after selecting items for purchase.

Customers wishing to purchase items using the systems taught by either Schlieffers or Roslak are required to register for and possess a customer card or feeding a printed ticket into

a reader at a checkout register. Preferred embodiments of Applicant's invention does not so burden the customers. Therefore, neither Schlieffers nor Roslak teach or suggest either of Claims 33-39 or 55.

Accordingly, this application is now in condition for allowance, and such is respectfully requested. If the examiner has any further small matters requiring discussion, he is encouraged to telephone the undersigned for expeditious handling.

Respectfully submitted,



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